
Statement on U.S. Assistance to Colombia

By

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Secretary of State

[The following is a reprint of the statement by Madeline K. Albright on U.S. assistance to Colombia, 11 January 2000.]

I am very pleased to join the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, General Barry McCaffrey, and Special Envoy Buddy MacKay, in announcing a major initiative in support of Colombian President Pastrana's plan for achieving peace, fighting crime, promoting prosperity and improving governance throughout his country.



We have a profound interest in helping Colombia to achieve these closely-linked goals. Four-fifths of the cocaine entering our country either comes from Colombia or is transported through it. Most of Colombia's heroin production is exported to the United States. And drug-related activities fuel crime, corruption and social problems throughout the Americas.

Our initiative has five elements, to be funded through a supplemental appropriations request for the year 2000, and as part of the President's budget for the next fiscal year.

- Our assistance will be used, first, to help train and equip

Colombian security forces so that more of the country is brought under the control of democracy and the rule of law.

- Second, we will actively support President Pastrana's effort to negotiate peaceful settlements with illegal armed groups.
- Third, we will dramatically increase support for alternative development, strengthening local governments and resettling persons displaced by conflict.
- Fourth, we will enhance our backing for efforts to interdict drugs.
- Finally, and very importantly, we will assist in strengthening mechanisms for protecting human rights and promoting judicial reform.

As a matter of both policy and law, we will ensure that our assistance does not go to military units that have been implicated in abuses. We will help train judicial officials to investigate and prosecute human rights crimes. And we will continue to encourage the Colombian authorities to take appropriate action against violators of human rights whether those violators are military, paramilitary, guerrilla or just plain criminal.

The United States is not alone in helping Colombia. With our strong support, the IMF has approved a new \$2.7 billion program. We are endorsing Bogota's request for nearly \$3 billion in loans from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. And we are encouraging other bilateral donors to come forward. Recognizing that neither criminals nor conflicts respect national borders, we are also stepping up support for counter-drug and alternative development programs for Colombia's neighbors.

In preparing our initiative, we have consulted frequently with leading Members of Congress, who have shared with us their strong concerns about law enforcement and human rights. We will continue to work closely with them in the months ahead.

Our Colombia initiative reflects President Clinton's strong support for hemispheric cooperation on behalf of democracy and law, and his conviction that President Pastrana deserves our support in his effort to bring the benefits of reconciliation and the rule of law to his people.